

News Release



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Historic and Award Winning Point Cabrillo Light Station Celebrates 100 Years of National Service

MENDOCINO – One of the most complete publicly accessible lighthouse in the United States is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

The Point Cabrillo Light Station has been serving as a beacon in the night, guiding ships at sea for 100 years. It is located just north of Mendocino, off the coast of Mendocino County in Northern California. Its history and its location are intertwined with the history of the Pomo people, the Frolic shipwreck, the 1906 Earthquake and the doghole schooners.

To celebrate its place in our nation's history, California State Parks and the Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association are making a splash with events scheduled through out the year. The most notable events are the Partnership Celebration on June 6th and the historic relighting of the Point Cabrillo Light on June 10th. These are two of the events which will provide visitors and guests with a rare opportunity to share a historical time with friends and family, while learning more about the legacy of Point Cabrillo.

"This is history in the making," said Director Ruth Coleman of California State Parks. "It is only made possible by the hard work and dedication of hundreds of volunteers and private donations from our partners that have been restoring and maintaining this incredible light station."

"There are hundreds of stories to be told, here," said Ron Eich, president, Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association (PCLK). "We are very proud of the docents, families and interpreters who will share these stories with our visitors during this centennial celebration."

(more)

At the Partnership Celebration, on Saturday, June 6, the public will be invited to meet dignitaries and participate in the following events:

- Meet the family members of lightkeepers who were maintaining the lighthouse on an evening in 1960, when an ocean wave went over the Lighthouse (83-feet), destroying the fog signal equipment and covering the fog signal room with three-feet of rock, mud and driftwood.
- Take a tour to Frolic Cove, where an 1850 Gold Rush-era shipwreck led to the founding of Mendocino and the beginning of the timber industry in Northern California. The ship still lies on the ocean's floor.
- Visit the 250-gallon Marine Science aquarium to see with hermit crabs, abalone, sea slugs, sculpins, and many other ocean species.
- Tour the First Assistant Lightkeepers House and experience life at the Light Station in the early 1920s.
- Children may participate in activities such as assembling a life-size Grey Whale puzzle, making fish prints, face painting, bubble blowing, games and story telling.

At the "Relighting the Light" program, on Wednesday, June 10, at 9:30 p.m., visitors will go back in time as docents dressed in period costume converge on the lighthouse after nightfall and reenact the day the lighthouse was first lit 100 years ago on in June 10, 1909.

About the Point Cabrillo Light Station

- The facility is one of the most complete and publicly accessible U.S. Lighthouse Service light stations in the United States. Twelve of its original 15 structures are still in use today.
- The Point Cabrillo Fresnel lens is one of only three British Fresnel lenses operating in the United States. The light from the lens can be seen 15 miles to sea on a clear night.
- A Lightkeepers Period Museum, the Lighthouse Museum, Marine Science Exhibits, and a visitor center are major attractions at this State Historic Park, and are open 365 days/year.
- The Point Cabrillo Light Station is one of only two light stations in California that host guests at a bed-and-breakfast located on site.

California State Parks and the Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association (PCLK) are preparing to welcome more than 250 visitors and guests from around the world, as they join local communities in the celebration.

Media Opportunity:

A limited number of reporters and photographers will be able to tour the Lantern Room with dignitaries before the main event begins on Saturday, June 6. Those with reservations will be given first priority. Tours will begin every 20 minutes between 10-11 a.m. The Lantern Room is small so there will be only six people allowed on each tour. To make a reservation please call the Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association at 707-937-6123. # # #

Story Ideas

1906 Earthquake

The Point Cabrillo Light Station was built to help guide ‘Doghole’ schooners bringing lumber to rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. The earthquake had destroyed the only lighthouse between Cape Mendocino and Bodega Bay: the Point Arena Lighthouse.

“The earthquake left ships, men, and their cargos of milled wood and supplies at the mercy of the often cruel ocean. They were in more than 200 miles of the roughest coastal waters along the Pacific coast,” said Mendocino District Superintendent Marilyn Murphy at California State Parks. “The loss of the Point Arena lighthouse expedited a congressional appropriation for the construction of the Point Cabrillo Light Station (1908 – 1909).”

The First Night

The first lighting of the Point Cabrillo Lighthouse occurred at midnight on June 10, 1909. As 48 friends looked on, Wilhelm Baumgartner, head lightkeeper, Point Cabrillo Light Station, slowly climbed the darkened stairway into the Lantern Room of the newly constructed lighthouse and for the first time lit the large kerosene lamp, whose light was immediately beamed 15 miles into the Pacific Ocean by the new, and unique, Third Order Fresnel lens.

“The lighting of the Cabrillo light in 1909 marks a turning point in California history that forever changed the communities and people of California’s north coast,” said Ron Eich, president, Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association (PCLK). “The building and lighting of the Point Cabrillo lighthouse identifies the early awakening of the Northern California timber industry and the development of the ‘Doghole’ schooner for coastal maritime commerce.

“These ships quickly became the backbone for hauling milled lumber from hundreds of coastal mills to San Francisco for the rebuilding of the city, while also delivering tons and tons of supplies to the emerging coastal communities growing around each mill site. The early 1900 was a boom time for the timber/maritime industries. Unfortunately the growth of these industries also meant some exploitative subjugation of the Pomo people, who had inhabited the coastal headlands for more than 1,700 years,” he noted.

Dedication

The PCLK and State Parks have dedicated this 100-Year Centennial celebration to the Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers and their families (past and current). Their dedicated and historical services ensured a “guiding light of safety” to all mariners traversing Northern California waters from 1909 to 2009.

“The Lightkeepers and Light Stations along the northern coast were instrumental in reducing the loss of ships, lives, and cargo along the coast throughout the 1900s, and the Lightkeeper’s family made duty bearable at these lonely and often isolated outposts”, Eich said. “We should recognize that the Lightkeeper’s families created a small community without which light station duty would have been long and tedious duty days and nights coupled with

unbearable boredom. For these reasons, the PCLK and State Parks are honoring the Lightkeepers and their families during this 100-year anniversary.”

Restoration

The Point Cabrillo Light Station hosts 12 of its original 15 structures. All 12 have been recently rehabilitated or restored under the Point Cabrillo Restoration Project (a unique joint partnership between the PCLK, California State Parks, and the California State Coastal Conservancy). The Point Cabrillo Restoration Project was awarded the 2007 Governor’s Award for Historic Preservation and the California Historic Preservation Foundations 2007 Preservation Design Award, two of California’s most prestigious preservation awards.

Tourism

The Light Station with its museums and exhibits is open for public visitation 365 days/year. The public may visit the Lighthouse Museum, Lightkeeper’s Home Museum, and Marine Science exhibits from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily (including Christmas and New Years). Visitors may also stay at the Lighthouse Inn at Point Cabrillo located in the newly rehabilitated Head Lightkeepers House. Inn guests enjoy snacks and beverages each afternoon, a private tour of the lighthouse, and a five-course gourmet breakfast each morning. Visitors and guests may also hike the 3.5 miles of bluff-top trails and visit the site of the famous *Frolic* shipwreck in a nearby cove adjoining the park.

Future visitors and guests can learn more about Point Cabrillo and centennial activities at: www.pointcabrillo.org. Visitors interested in the Lighthouse Inn may acquire additional information at: www.mendocinolighthouse.pointcabrillo.org.

For additional information about the relighting and events calendar call PCLK at (707) 937-6123.

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